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morula tree (*Sclerocarya caffra*), from which such delightful cider is made. In the distance you hear the hoarse note of a *phalafala* horn, then the shrill ululations of women. They come nearer. You can hear them shout the words, '*Malematsha wee, Malamatsha wee; budi ga dzwala ga dzwala ga fɔlɔja, ga vutla vuphabaleni*' (Malematsha, Malematsha, the goat I bore, I bore and miscarried, as a goatling I returned)—the praise song of a district in Ulovedu. Then at a bend in the road you come upon a picturesque procession: in front walks a man, blower of the horn, followed by twenty women each with a calabash of beer placed in a basket on her head, a gift to the queen from the area of Malematsha. Perspiration runs down their faces; but they do not lose courage, for before they arrive at at their destination they will sit down by the roadside to quench their thirst from one or two of the calabashes they carry. Any one who then happens to pass will beg for a little, and he will not beg in vain.

You continue your way. A pigsty and an ash heap mark the approach to a village. A passer-by, spying a woman about her household duties, shouts her greetings, '*Re fiṭhuleleni*' ('Still our hunger') to which comes the reply, '*Fiṭhulelani zenu*,' a conventional refusal, but equivalent to 'Be hungry nicely' or 'Still your own hunger.' A second woman supplements it with the information, 'We have only just put on the pot.' If the food had been ready or the woman had wished to give the passer-by a tit-bit, the reply would have been, 'Here is food. We are eating.' That one of the ways of greeting should be associated with the begging of food is typical of the Lovedu. Some one returning from a visit to another area is greeted with, 'What are they eating over there,' or 'What are they stinting us of,' and the reply invariably is, 'They are being killed by hunger,' even if there is plenty and you have been royally entertained. There are greetings associated with activities: if you pass a man or woman working in the fields, you say, 'Workers,' and the modest reply is, 'We are hardly working at all'; to a woman carrying wood, you say, '*A di voyi dikhunye*' ('Let the wood return') and the reply is, '*Di voyile*' (It has returned). In fact, learning to greet people politely in the Lovedu language is not at all the simple thing it is in English.

At last you find yourself before the village of Raselaka, larger than any of those you have passed on the way and, unlike many of them, surrounded by a thick hedge of thorny *lencḏwa* bush (*Pterolobium exosum*). At the entrance you trip over a slate-coloured river-stone, jutting out a few inches above ground. This is a charm, laid when the village was built, to keep out the witches; it makes them cool, causing them to forget their evil designs. It is part of a more comprehensive scheme for the protection of the village: the gate posts are of special wood (*khirale* or *modutu*, *Celtis Kraussiana*) smeared with medicines on the day they were set up; round the circumference are medicated pegs (*diphaba*) of *khirale*, the whole being completed by the magic circle drawn by the sister or father's sister, if she is still alive, who drags a 'doctored' branch of thorny *mukhalo* (*Zizyphus mucronata*) round the circumference. If this is not done by her before the doctor begins his work, it must be done subsequently, when the precaution of smearing the soles of her feet with medicine is taken lest by entering she 'opens up a way for witches'. The

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to roast. 'Let's ask riddles,' intervenes Khiebe. 'Here's one: Riddle-me-riddle-me-ree (*thaiii*), the witches are dancing on the thorns.' 'Stupid,' scornfully rejoins Mudumi. 'We all know that one. Hailstones, of course, for they bounce as they fall on the grass.' After pondering a moment he challenges: '*Thaiii*, the ox of my father has entered the pool, I remain holding its tail.' Roars of derision issue from the rest, 'A porridge-twirler,' they answer almost all together. The spiked head of a twirler is like the horns of an ox; it is thrust into the pot of water, while one holds it by its handle. 'Here's something you don't know,' comes from Mudumpani. '*Thaiii*, the nest of the water bird hangs down over the pool.' The company is silent, then there are some guesses, but it is beyond them, and they give it up. 'The eyelashes, of course,' says Mudumpani, 'because they hang over one's eyes.' Once the ball starts rolling, riddles follow one another in rapid succession. 'The babbling of a brook' turns out to be a calabash cup, for down its long handle beer gurgles as you drink; 'They always stand looking at each other' are the doorposts of a hut; and 'The chief entering the crimson (muddy) pool' is sunset. It is impossible to capture the poetry of these riddles; you cannot render their alliteration or play upon words in English. But it is clear that these youngsters are well versed in them. The time when riddles are most popular is, however, when a wedding party is present and the young people have to entertain them in their hut. On such an occasion riddles provide a mild form of competition between the two parties, that of the bride and that of the groom.

The men have retired to their huts, whence they will not reappear. The women have eaten the evening meal informally round the fires and are just chatting. In a hut three girls are sitting by candlelight, one of them, who has been to school, writing a love-letter for her friend to her lover in town. 'Why are you throwing me over?' she asks. 'Why don't you write? Please send me a nice cloth and a blanket, but not one like that which you gave your wife!' In another hut some children have persuaded Mamujaji, an elderly woman, to tell them tales. She begins, '*Dgano-Dgano* (a story, a story).' They reply, '*Dgano*.' 'Once upon a time,' she continues, but before she gets further they again interject, '*Dgano*.' Then she goes on, 'There lived a boy who had sores all over his body.' '*Dgano*,' they repeat whenever the speaker hesitates or takes breath. 'One day when the girls went to fetch grass. . . .' This is the beginning of a story about a bird who gives away the girls who kill the boy. A marked characteristic is the frequent occurrence of a song and refrain, during the telling of the tale, in this case, '*Phogu, Phogu ya Dorwa*, &c. ('Bird, bird of the south'), so that what with the interjections and singing of the chorus of the refrain, the listeners appear to take as active a part in the story as the narrator herself. At the end of each tale there is a long-drawn-out '*Dgaaano*' and all spit into the fire. In the small villages of to-day story-telling has almost completely died out. Where there are only one or two present a story loses most of its charm, and there are many young men and women who know practically no stories, more particularly among Christians, whose parents prefer them to learn their lessons rather than tell them stories.

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881 Consider for a moment the situation as the boys stab the elephant
573 As they do so, the old men, mature in their wisdom, kindly guardians of
847 the initiates, slowly and solemnly 'sing with signs' (*va rima zwega*). These *zwega* are often also an accompaniment of the songs of the boys, in themselves most exquisite poetry. Many of the 'signs' are unintelligible, e.g. 'You may bring me a skin cradle. I am carrying an infant, my little children'; or 'The guinea fowls are crying; they are scratching for food, my children.' The old men always greet the novices, *vana va ga* (my little ones), though to one another and to the shepherds they are *valoi* (witches). The old men also chant proverbs and sayings, warnings and advice, all manner of admonitions and encouragement, some stereotyped, some extempore. To enumerate them would be to enumerate the virtues that are esteemed and the vices that are condemned in the society. 'I told you, O novice, but you plugged your ears with plugs of wood' is a general admonition, reminding the boys that, when they were young, they often were disobedient and now their errors are being expiated. Young boys are often told that, when they go to the *vudiga*, their impudence and disobedience will make their trials harder. 'Beware', a man might say to a youngster who is unwilling to help him or an elder. 'The *vudiga* is not far off; you will find no one to lift the weight from your head.' The virtues that are inculcated in this way are merely those the boys have heard of a thousand times in their ordinary lives. Again, one must not imagine that the boys take more note of the words of the old men in the lodge than we do when we sing a hymn in church, but they know that those *zwega* and admonitions express the fundamental values and ideals in the society: generosity, respectfulness and obedience to the elders, helpfulness, and so on. 'Give your seat up to an old man, carry his bundle for him on the road, go with him further than he asks you, do not mock at the blind or cripple'—these are some of the things one old man may say, whereas another will condemn theft and adultery and extol mutuality and modesty, almost impersonally, it is true, but always beautifully, solemnly, and effectively. These things sink into the minds of the novices, not as so many individual precepts, but as part of the ritual of the lodge, all indivisibly united into one whole concretion of values and sentiments. A man will say that the *vudiga* is a wonderful thing, but he will be at a loss to tell you anything concrete that it teaches. For you cannot dissect out a precept here and an example there—it is all one, like life itself.

881 We may now, before proceeding to adult education, touch upon a few
931 aspects of the *vudiga* and the *khoba*. Besides breaking the girl's attachment to the things of her childhood, the *khoba* stresses the importance and dangers of sexual maturity. But it can hardly be said that the *vudiga* is much concerned with the sudden emergence of a capacity for true sexual experience. Both institutions help us to understand the meaning and methods of attaining social adulthood; but they belong to different cultural backgrounds and are derived from different cultural sources. They are not counterparts of one another. The *khoba* is indigenous, the *vudiga* is foreign. We cannot here study the manner in which these two institutions, as well as the *vyali* and *vuhwera* (two further initiations for boys and girls), have merged with the different cultures in neighbouring tribes though the varying acceptance or rejection or

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CHAPTER VIII

FERTILITY AND THE DRUM CULT

The setting of the sacred drums in a mystical cult—initiation into the secrets of the whistling ancestors—calendric observances connected with fecundity, masks, and mummeries.

794 BESIDES the girls' puberty ceremony and the circumcision of boys, there are other initiation ceremonies among the Lovedu. One is the *vyali* (often looked upon as the women's counterpart of circumcision because of its regimentation), contemporaneous with which is the boys' *vuhwera*, consisting largely of masked dancing; another is the *gomana* for men. These are closely interwoven with a fertility and rain cult which, because of its association with sacred drums, one may call the drum cult. Their educational object, never very strongly marked in Bantu initiation schools, pales into insignificance before the ceremonial. Indeed the *gomana* as a 'school' is only an aspect of *gomana* ceremonial as a whole, the primary function of which is to secu[illegible] rain. The *vyali-vuhwera-gomana* complex is characterized by esoteric masks, mummeries, and mysteries and by a category of values which we may term the 'mystical philosophy' of the Lovedu. We shall give merely a brief picture of the complex, because, at the time of writing, the first *vyali-vuhwera* held for thirty-five years is still in progress and our ideas as to its true meaning are far from being settled.

794 796 The sacred drum cult has many ramifications. The *zwidjami*, supposed to be ancestral spirits coming to earth to take part in *gomana* singing and drumming of the sacred drums, have become incorporated into other aspects of the culture. They appear in the bush near the village whenever a harvest offering has been made in the families of royal relatives; they come at the installation of a new district head and at the death of close relatives of the queen. On these occasions they join in the singing and dancing of *lengu* songs, songs associated with the *vyali* of men and which, in addition to the above-mentioned occasions, are employed also when women dance for rain. The type of instrument by means of which the *zwidjami* whistle or bleat out their songs and messages is used also by the Bird, the ruling spirit of the *vyali*.

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534 778 Drums are much used in Lovedu life; they are played in the *guba* dance to the accompaniment of reed pipes, they are important in all initiations except circumcision, they are beaten for days at the dancing of possessed people, and it is significant that the public recognition by the queen of a new district head at his installation consists in the handing over of a drumstick (*khibha kha goma*). Drums are of two types: the long cylindrical drum played with the hands as it lies on its side and the *goma*, a rounded drum with handles, played by means of a drumstick as it stands in an upright position. The sacred drums (*digomana*) of the tribe are of the *goma* type, but, unlike ordinary *goma* drums, are played by hand, not with a drumstick. They are four in number, each with its special

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office-bearers of the *vyali*. It is significant that medical treatment is not confined to initiates, but includes, not only the 'owners' or holders of the 'school', but in many instances also all the older men and women present. It is done to make the ceremony a success. After their treatment, the initiates may not wash until about ten days have elapsed, when the 'mother' of the 'school' takes them to the river. From this time the novices, except in the case of pregnant women, are allowed no covering over the shoulder or body. Their loin-coverings should consist of hard, unworked skins, but in the 1939 *vyali*, owing to the difficulty of obtaining skins, European cloth was allowed.

From now the *vyali*, held in the *khoro* of the district head or chief, will continue for a period of a full year. Except on a few special occasions, however, all the activities are confined to the evenings and early mornings, leaving the initiates free to carry on their ordinary work at home for the greater part of the day. Most of the initiates sleep at home and married women become pregnant and have their babies during the year of their initiation without any inconvenience.

One of the most important activities of the *vyali* is the singing and drumming every morning and evening during the whole period of the initiation. Some of the songs are related to the stage of the initiation, different stages being characterized by different songs: thus after the medical treatment marking the official opening in about September a new song that has not been practised previously is begun, and later, when summer fruits are plentiful, a song is sung in which this abundance is mentioned. There is a cluster of songs associated with bringing the singing to a close each evening, when the *khoro* has to be closed by the girls, and again in the early morning, when the gate is opened. Most of the songs consist of a simple phrase repeated over and over again, the words of which are meaningless to the singers, and frequently, even where the song is long, only a small portion of it is repeated. There are songs consisting of praises of the queen, well-known district heads, and their areas, and a very important one in praise of the chief girl of the *vyali*. One song sung by the 'shepherds' refers to girls who enter only towards the end of the initiation, pointing out how inferior this is to full initiation, while another exhorts initiates to pinch and otherwise torment such girls. *Mwaseko* songs, which are accompanied by dancing and begun in about December, are the main feature of the singing after the Bird, the pivot of the ceremony, has arrived (April). They are very similar to *lenge* songs sung for rain, associated with the *vimbelani* spirits, and are believed to be identical in function. There are also *lenge* songs in the *vyali*, and it is significant that among the Narevi there is each year a woman's counterpart of the *gomana* drumming in which *lenge* songs are sung. If any initiate is seduced during the period of initiation, special songs of derision are sung in which she and her family are mentioned by name. Where the songs have no dancing accompaniment, they are sung to the clapping of hands until the arrival of the Bird, when two flat pieces of wood are used.

Initiation is considered to be a time of hardship for those who undergo it. The singing every evening, sometimes as late as eleven o'clock and

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241 782 where they will pour and to carry the beer in the *khirudwana* basket used in honour of the gods. The occasion is one of joy. The women have already in all likelihood sung *lesugu* songs special to the occasion amid joyous trillings while preparing the beer and, since in addition to the special beer of the gods much ordinary beer will have been prepared, a wide circle of relatives, including those of the wives, will have been invited.

When the queen held her *thugula* ceremony in August, 1938, Didi was despatched at eight o'clock in the morning to fetch home Magovo, the cow dedicated to the queen's mother, for the harvest giving should take place fairly early in the day, though in practice the rule is often observed in the breach and we have seen ceremonies take place after midday. As it is not easy to drive home one cow of a herd, all were driven and put into the *khɔrɔ* where every one had gathered. When Magovo's hind legs had been tied, the chief wife of Mulogwane, deceased brother of the chief to whose family the queen is *khadi*, appeared carrying in a basket a calabash of beer and the queen's mother's beads (*mudala*, the well-known 'beads of the water'). Pouring some of the beer in a wooden platter, she handed it to the queen, who, holding the beads in he hands, placed it before Magovo with the words, 'Here is beer, Magovo of Muhale (one of the earliest kings), beer of the new corn. We say, Stop this epidemic (winds) to which you have exposed us. Here, too, are your beads. We see neither people (subjects) nor riches; we see only that poverty which you have left for us.' The cow sipped a little of the beer, whereupon all prostrated themselves in greeting (*hu lɔsha*), while one or two women rent the air with their joyous trillings. Sometimes (but it was omitted on this occasion) the beads are placed round the neck of the cow and left there for the whole day.

The dedicated cow having been untied, all now repaired to the courtyard of the chief wife of Mulogwane, where they sat round the shrine, the queen and sons and daughters near by, wives further away, while the small children were made to kneel on the lower side of the shrine, hands together and palms up. Pouring out beer on the mound, the queen said a prayer similar to the previous one, adding that the gods must tell one another and not leave any one out. Then, drinking a little herself, she placed the calabash on the ground for the next person to take up and drink. Each one in turn placed the gourd on the ground for the next to take up, till all the relatives had drunk, when it was returned to the queen. She drank once more, saying, 'He who gives to the gods must not remain hungry,' and laid the calabash upside down on the mound. The small children lapped up the beer from the ground, and trilling and *hu lɔsha* marked the end of the ceremony.

241 782 ●533 535 Now pots of beer for the crowd that had gathered were brought out and general drinking began. After a while the men took out the drums and began dancing an old dance, the *matagwa*. Thereafter the women began the sacred *lesugu* songs, to which men and women danced in a ring in the courtyard of the chief wife. The queen herself beat the big drum. It was now near sunset. Suddenly a wail like the bleating of a sheep was heard; another, then another, in the direction of the bush behind the

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village. It was the *zwidjajani*, ancestral spirits come to join in the joy and revelry of the living. They opened the next song and joined in the singing of the women, all in the whistling language which people make out by its tone. Later more beer was brought out and when the *zwidjajani* began a new song no one took any notice. 'If you are drinking beer, what are we to drink', came the wails of the *zwidjajani* and a pot of beer was brought to the bush by councillors. Dancing and singing continued till the small hours of the morning, when the sounds of the *zwidjajani* disappeared in the direction of Maulwi, the burial grove of the dead queens, and the revellers, happy and drunk from beer of the *thugula*, retired to bed. The spirits visit only important members of the royal group and a few other families, but beyond this there are no differences between the harvest giving of the queen and that of other people.

Ritual killings of all kinds are insignificant by contrast with the beer offering. There are, first, killings specially for the ancestors, but they are so rare that many people have never seen them. Secondly, there are occasions when the killings, clearly ritual, are not thought of as an offering or sacrifice, because nothing is given to the ancestors. And, thirdly, there are killings, not associated with ancestors or religion, in which small pieces of meat may nevertheless be set aside to 'tell' (*hu suma*) the gods of some event or to propitiate them. *Hu suma* is a conception somewhat different from our 'offer' or 'give'; it has two connotations as used in ordinary life: it is either merely to inform a superior or, by extension of this idea, to send him a share of something good one has, such as a leg of an animal slaughtered or a calabash of the beer one has brewed. In approaching the gods, sometimes one and sometimes the other conception is uppermost.

The killing which most clearly contains the conception of an offering and the primary purpose of which is propitiation of the gods is the slaughter of a black sheep for rain at the grave of a royal ancestor: the victim is immolated, small pieces of meat cut from all parts of it are set aside for the gods, and all the bones are collected and buried in the grave, together with the stomach contents. Equally stressed, however, is the eating of the meat without salt by the assembled crowd. At the installation of a district head, a beast, referred to as a *thugula*, is killed and, in so far as it is killed in a special manner and morsels of meat set aside for the gods to be cooked and later eaten without salt by children below the age of puberty, it is the vicarious submission of a gift to the ancestors. But the major portion of meat is not ritually eaten nor are the bones collected, for a hind leg is sent to the queen. So little is the 'goat of killing' in marriage ceremonial regarded as an offering or sacrifice that we sought for it in vain in the context of a killing for the ancestors. Yet pieces of meat are laid on the shrine and a prayer offered, though the rest of the meat is not ritually eaten nor are the bones kept. Still further removed from an offering is the goat killed on a death to provide a skin for covering the body: its meat is eaten without salt, and all who partake of it must sleep in the hut of the deceased, but nothing is given to the ancestors and no prayer is offered. On the other hand, though the *lolopo* doctor, when killing a goat to treat a patient, sets aside pieces of meat

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782 for his ancestors, this killing, primarily medical in purpose, is not to propitiate and has no religious significance.

An interesting though unusual killing among the Lovedu is the 'bringing home' of a spirit. Maborɔmɔ, an uninherited widow living with her three children in a village of relatives, had had much illness in the family which, after consultation with many doctors, was attributed to her husband's brother Pheduli. Pheduli had been stabbed to death in a Johannesburg compound and was now complaining, 'I want to be brought home with a head of cattle.' All his relatives were asked to be present and contribute their share of corn, because 'We are placing a beast to be Pheduli'. On the day of the ceremony a young black and white bull-calf was caught and held, and, when beer (*muphaba*) was poured down its throat, the *khadi* uttered a prayer, saying, 'Drink and tell all the other spirits these matters.' Then they repaired with the same calabash to the courtyard, where all the children were called to sit near: the *khadi*, praying for health, poured the beer on a spear, battle-axe, and horn which had belonged to Pheduli, and the children drank what was left in the calabash, each one placing it in turn on the ground. The doctor, who, supervising his side of the ceremony, had been busy in a hut preparing his medicines, now came out and asked that the dedicated calf again be caught. Mixing a powder, said to consist of *mufera* and other medicines to make spirits forget, he told the *khadi* to smear it on some of the hairs at the end of the tail and to tie a knot. He himself then smeared the whole tail and body. Repairing to the courtyard where the *thugula* objects still lay, the doctor took out a bag of powder, which he shook up to 'smoke' the objects in its dust. Then he dug a hole where the beer had been poured.

Meanwhile the meat of a goat which had been killed was cooking in a pot. Before the killing (which we did not witness), medicine, we were told, had been smeared on the goat while the doctor uttered the words, 'Sleep, sleep here, and look after your people.' The meat was eaten without salt by the relatives as well as a few others who were present and the bones carefully collected. A dog seized hold of one and was chased by all till the bone was retrieved. Having placed the bones in the hole, the doctor inquired, 'In which direction do the Lovedu look when buried?' The *khadi* pointed to the north. Then, taking the head of the goat, he placed it facing north on top of the bones and said, 'We people all look in that direction.' He took out medicine, which he gave to the *khadi* to pour on the bones, smoked them with his powder, and ordered that the hole be filled with the stomach contents mixed with earth. The *khadi* then beat down the earth and made a small mound. Dancing and the singing of *lenugu* songs now began and continued all night till at dawn the *khadi* took some water and squirted (*hu phasa*) thrice, saying, 'As for us, we are going, we are returning home. And you, may you remain in peace.' In the beer that was provided for this festive occasion was put some medicine, 'the powder of death', generally used after a death, lest people *khuma*; for the burial of the goat symbolizes the burial and bringing home of their ancestor, just as the dedicated goat symbolizes the immortality of his spirit.

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794 shown how to dance in possessed fashion, all, it was said, lest when her
755 spirit left her she should be lazy and not know how to work. Betty
535 walked as in a dream with a wooden, expressionless look and at times appeared so exhausted that we feared she would not be able to lift the stamper when imitating stamping. This mime-show is not performed in all initiations, nor is a goat always killed, for the methods of doctors differ considerably and the patient's relatives may have no goat. Often the patient is set to dance and treated with medicines till she falls down with the spirit upon her.

794 It was now three o'clock in the afternoon, and, the initiation being
755 complete, the doctor thought it time that the spirits departed. She
535 ushered the possessed into the hut, where they all sat down, offered them
533 each a pinch of snuff, took a rattle and began her farewell song, the whole company (for the hut had filled with spectators) joining in the refrain. Next the initiate sang her farewell song, mentioning what she wanted as her accessories—several white cloths, a woollen cap, and a spear to hold when dancing. When all had finished singing, they took off their *zwiphomo* (clothes), which their attendants (for each possessed person has some one to help him when his spirit appears) put into bundles to take away, and lay down to sleep. After three minutes the doctor grunted and groaned as departing spirits are apt to do, sat up and began dressing in everyday clothes. The others followed her example and went outside. The patient, but a short while before so exhausted, came smiling out of the hut and scolded the people for letting her oversleep in this shocking manner (appearing to have no knowledge of her initiation). Then all washed their faces and urinated in the hedge, as women do on rising in the mornings.

794 Initiation into the cult is said to make the person well again, and all
755 into whose history one inquires claim to have been cured. Betty herself
784 had no further trouble. If, however, they become ill again, it may be a second spirit, for many people have three or four. There is, however, no further initiation; the second spirit is merely called upon to manifest itself. A second or third spirit may take possession without causing any illness, merely announcing its arrival and making known its wants when the person is possessed. After initiation the spirit manifests itself when it has some complaint or desire, when the person has broken some taboo, or when specially induced by dancing or prayer. A possessed person has to keep certain taboos: he may never eat such firstfruits as pumpkin leaves or green mealies, *morula* fruits or beer made of the newly-harvested corn without medicine given him at his initiation and renewable every year or every two years; any new thing undertaken, as when a possessed woman becomes pregnant, must be reported to the spirit. Some *malɔpɔ* may not be beaten with a green stick, lest the spirit descend upon them; others may not touch European medicine. Many of them run away from Europeans even when not actually possessed, and one man had to keep his books securely locked in a suit-case lest his wife should see them and become troubled by her spirit. The very mention of the word *lelɔpɔ* in the presence of some may cause the spirit to come. Observances are not the same for all and taboos to be observed depend largely on the doctor who

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does the initiation. There are no special burial rites associated with the cult. There is, however, a vague belief that injury to a snake in the village may in some cases harm a possessed person, an interesting belief in view of the fact that there is so little trace in Lovedu religion of the Zulu idea that ancestral spirits manifest themselves in snakes.

There is a special relationship between a possessed person and the doctor who initiated him: every year when the medicine needs renewal, beer or *morula* cider is prepared, the doctor, who comes with a number of disciples and attendants, is called and there is a great dance of the possessed often lasting several days. This is 'dancing for medicine' (*ku vina tshidi*). Some possessed people have to be specially doctored before drinking the first *morula* cider and the *morula* season is always a time of *lelɔpɔ* gatherings; others are required to contribute corn at harvest time for a large *lelɔpɔ* dance at the home of the doctor. These gatherings, at which a goat may be slaughtered in addition to the cider provided, add greatly to the prestige of the doctor. There is sometimes considerable jealousy between *malɔpɔ* doctors, who, with those initiated by them, may form rival schools. Some doctors refuse to allow their followers to dance with those initiated by other doctors without special permission. At one seance, at which there had been some unpleasantness, the doctor smeared some powder into incisions on the neck, tongue, crown, and sides of the heads of her disciples. Then, taking some medicated water in her mouth, she squirted (*ku phasa*), saying, 'I "place" you. Don't you dance any more. I don't like dancing every day without my special permission. Any *lelɔpɔ* who dances where you are dancing will break her leg or be badly hurt.' The remainder of the water was given them to drink.

An interesting feature of the cult of possession is that many people when the spirit is upon them speak in a foreign tongue, said to be Thovɔlɔ or Kharanga. Investigation into this matter, however, shows that this is not as startling a phenomenon as it might appear. When possessed, a person for the most part sits silent unless he is a doctor. If he speaks at all, this is in monosyllables, for all his wants and messages are conveyed in song. *Lelɔpɔ* songs are stereotyped and known to many because the uninitiated have to join in the refrain when rattling the accompaniment. In these songs there is usually a number of foreign words, though many consist purely of meaningless sounds, such as '*We le wee eva o wee wee wee wana wee*'. Often peculiarities in the pronunciation of vowels are interpreted as Thovɔlɔ. When the refrain begun (*ku rumia*) by the possessed person has been taken up by the chorus, he continues with the song or interpolates his own words, usually Sotho with a few foreign words interspersed, till he wishes to stop. In this way he makes known his wishes. It quite frequently happens that no one understands the gibberish of the possessed person, and doctors generally have an attendant who interprets what they wish to convey. There are, however, numerous well-known words in general use by people when their spirit is upon them—for instance, *mufoto* or *muvoto* for *lefɔla* (snuff), *bula* or *mvula* for *meetse* (water), *va ga mbaya* for *va ga ntiya* (they may beat me), *kaya* for *kae* (home). But many possessed people speak pure Sotho, and it is recognised that a newly initiated person may not

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794 533 192 know Thɔvɔlɔ. The Lovedu themselves are not critical, and the usual reply when one expresses any doubt about the genuineness of the possessed or the possibility of fraud is, 'If they were not really possessed how could they speak a strange tongue?'

794 It is not our purpose to discuss the psychology of possession among the Lovedu. We should, however, point out that it is in no way associated with abnormalities of character or with crises in the life of the individual. Its symptoms are not of a nervous nature, such as indicate *ukuthwasa* among Nguni; there are, except when the spirit descends upon them, no twitchings; uncontrollable hiccups are unknown; members of the cult are not hysterical or mentally unbalanced nor can they be distinguished in their daily activities from others. There is no change in the personality of the individual when his spirit is upon him, although some of them sing in a low voice when possessed by a man and others dance in a peculiar way. Nor is there any difference to be seen between one possessing spirit and another in the same individual: when his second spirit comes upon a possessed person, it often continues the conversation where the first spirit left off, and the only indication of its arrival may be its own announcement in a song or perhaps gulping movements and a gentle falling back of the patient. Finally, of interest psychologically was the farewell dance of all *malɔpɔ* just before the *vyali* initiation for girls in September, 1938. Their songs and dances were taboo during the period of the 'school' as they were not allowed to compete with those of the *vyali* which had not yet ended in October, 1939. We must not conclude from this or from the fact that Christians do not become *malɔpɔ* that possession is imposture. There are wide avenues for fraud, but most *malɔpɔ* are genuine victims of mass-suggestion. The cult, though open to men, is confined largely to women. It is not associated with gifts of prophecy or the finding of lost objects, and there are no revelations concerning the Beyond.

The bearing of the possessed when not dancing is quiet and dignified and detached in contrast to the diabolical manifestations of the possessed in Europe in the Middle Ages. It appears to be neither a paranoic nor a compensatory phenomenon. We dare not relate trance experience with neuroses or psychoses, for we need to orientate ourselves, not from our own, but from a wider relativistic psychology or psychopathology; the mental reflects the cultural configuration and the disposition of drives in the mind must be viewed relatively to the disposition of forces in the culture. The whole cult among the Lovedu is remarkably stereotyped; behaviour under the influence of the spirit, the songs, the things demanded by spirits, conform to a type. Even the possessing spirits themselves are stereotyped, being almost always grandparents.

It is our impression that if any one in the least degree suggestible were made to dance without sustenance for several days in the noise and excitement of seances, he would be liable to fall down exhausted and respond in the traditional manner to the attentions of the women. But not all initiations are successful. In one case witnessed by us, the young woman quite obviously did not want to become possessed: she danced in a half-hearted manner and, under the pretext of tending her baby, kept

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643 bring with them in addition dancing performers (*gɔsha*) to please her and
709 to evoke her pity at the sorrowful sight of people dancing in summer when
535 they ought to be ploughing. The movements of this dancing do not
821 differ from those of ordinary dancing, but the music consists of *lenugu* songs sung also at the annual harvest ceremony, on the death of important royal people, and at the girls' initiation 'school'.

643 The most renowned of all dancing for rain is the *legɔbathɬe*, a special
709 kind of *gɔsha*, the mourning dance of a section of Thovelo people living
535 under one of the district heads, Maculana. It is more dignified, its move-
583 ments slower and more stately, and its drumming more subdued than in an
821 ordinary *gɔsha*. So lightly are the drums struck that the clear, silvery, varied tones of the reed pipes ring out like the peal of bells. Only two drums are used, and none but those who have lost at least one parent may perform, and it is begun in the dim light of the dawn before sunrise, when, after a short spell, it stops and is resumed later in the day. When some one person has greatly angered the queen, and drought is believed to be due to her displeasure on this account, the married women from all the villages in the royal neighbourhood assemble every morning after cooking to dance, singing, 'We are being killed on account of a bogyman in skins' (*re vulaiwa gi Madikadyana di vɬɬvɬdana*). Grandmothers nurse the babies and encourage the younger women with their trillings and dancing movements. The dust rises high and by sunset they are black with dirt and sweat; but next day and the next they come again, sometimes for as long as a week, till rain falls or continued drought makes it clear that some other cause is operating as well. The great hardship this dancing entails (for nursing mothers who perform have no time to feed their babies) is thought to melt the heart of the queen. Too much rain, as well as too little, is laid at the door of the queen. On one occasion, when it had rained almost incessantly for six weeks, the chief councillor said in the presence of the queen, 'Fat does not fill the pot' (*makhura a a ɖale bija*), meaning that there can be too much of a good thing—a hint to the queen to regulate things better.

643 There is no belief that is stronger in the tribe even to-day than that
709 in the power of the queen to transform the clouds. This does not, how-
821 ever, mean that they do not recognize the regularity of the seasons. People know that the month of February is generally the rainiest in the year; that the month *Morenane* (October), when the Southern Cross sets just before bedtime, is the time when the first rains are approaching, and no one would *lova* rain in winter any more than Europeans would organize a day of prayer for rain in that season. Yet if rain does not come at its proper time or the season is generally bad, it may be said, 'The queen has not changed the hoeing season [i.e. the year] nicely' (*a va fedula ledzema ha vutse*); for if the cycle of seasons is considered inevitable, whether the new year is brought in propitiously or otherwise is in the hands of the queen.

643 Though renowned as the greatest rain-maker in South Africa, Mujaji
791 never works alone. She always has a rain-doctor, of whom there are many in the tribe, to work with her. She chooses any renowned doctor, but may change him for another if people complain that the rain is bad—

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177 duplicity and ingratitude, suspicion, and attempts to take advantage of
797 kindness. These were construed as barbaric traits that had to be uprooted. There appeared, in addition, to be an unusually large number of anti-Christian practices: the tribal justice, proceeding upon no fixed principles, seemed corrupt; there were periodical smellings-out of witches; people believed in the divinity of the queen. Dancing and drumming were obnoxious, not merely because they were 'heathenish din', but also because of their association with the idolatry of the *digoma* and the 'schools', the sexual laxity at the *gosha* dances and possession by spirits.
● [533] There were also mendicant minstrels who played the xylophone (*dibila*) and sang for their food and lodging, whose songs did not always express Christian sentiments. One, for instance, not long ago, used to sing, 'Christians are cheats who put us to sleep before we eat [referring to grace], so as to kill us unawares', and another's song rang more crudely: 'The husbandless woman climbs to the roof of the hut; she urinates and the rats fall down in a faint'.

Early Church policy laid down what should be outlawed on mission-owned farms: wife-purchase, shrines, *digoma*, rain-making, witchcraft, divination, 'strengthenings with medicine', the consecration of weapons, and other repugnant customs. It stamped as particularly reprehensible theft, sexual offences, opposition to the Church, and, later, migration to seek employment in the sinful towns. The sanctions with which it can enforce obedience upon a self-governed estate include refusal of such privileges as baptism and confirmation, public denunciation in church, various penalties, such as road-making and catechism classes, and even expulsion from the mission station. Natives believe that the whole system is served by a network of espionage, and the intrinsic difficulties of the situation have been immensely increased by the fact that financially the mission station largely relies upon the contributions in fees and work of its tenants. On one occasion a self-constituted committee of disaffected tenants in Johannesburg, who were in arrears, accused the mission of capitalistic exploitation and of robbing the Natives of their country, and drastic action was necessary.

177 The Christian attack upon the marriage pattern and especially polygyny
795 has led to many subtle reactions. Devout Christians of the old order still
184 refuse to accept cattle, but surreptitiously pocket money payments which by the nature of the case can be used to subserve personal, not social, ends. The Church no longer sets its face against *munyoalo*, but seeks to turn it into a kind of dowry, and Christians call it 'thanks'. The Christian's freedom of choice of a mate weakens the reciprocities and emphasizes independence and materialism at the price of the patterns of co-operation and long-range mutuality. A Christian often marries a non-relative, but cannot easily escape the complex net thrown over the whole social structure by the cattle exchanges. He may have to face the opposition of those relatives whose displeasure may cause illness to him or his family. If he marries a second wife, his cross-cousin, he is excommunicated, and he will be unable, even on his death-bed, to secure the final consolation and blessing of the Church unless he sets aside his pagan wife. Polygyny, the inheritance of wives, and beer are so deeply rooted in